



# **Texas Transportation Commission**

125 E 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483

August 29, 2007

The Honorable Vicki Truitt  
Texas House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78738-2910

Dear Representative Truitt:

Thank you for your recent letter to Mr. Behrens expressing your concern regarding my decision to test speed cameras and send letters to vehicle owners observed traveling over the posted speed limit.

I asked Mr. Behrens to delay his response to give me some time to think about your position and the supporting reasoning. I assure you the agency has not moved forward with the Request for Proposal. However, there were reasons I wanted to see the agency conduct a limited experiment.

First is the matter of safety. We are constantly looking for new ways to reduce accidents on our highway system. Camera technology has already proven to be effective in managing toll roads, monitoring traffic congestion and discouraging crime. I was interested to know if an official letter to a vehicle owner observed traveling over the speed limit would in fact reduce the number of accidents which occur on our highway system each year. In Texas, speed limits are established using the "85th Percentile Method." This technique monitors free-flowing traffic to determine what speed 85 percent of the traffic is traveling at or below. The available data show crash rates are lowest around the 85th percentile of speed. The trial use of the technology and the follow-up letter would have been focused on that 15 percent who exceed the posted speed limit and cause a disproportionate number of accidents on our highway system.

Second is the matter of cash flow. In 1987, the Legislature appropriated \$109,600,000 from the State Highway Fund for the Department of Public Safety. In 2007, the Legislature appropriated \$526,700,000 from the State Highway Fund—a 480 percent increase—yet the number of state troopers attempting to control traffic on our state highway system has increased by only 385 since 1987. As you know, the appropriation is a direct dollar-for-dollar reduction in the State Highway Fund, and would have otherwise been available for congestion relief, maintenance, and safety. It was my thought that if we could demonstrate a more cost-effective method of reducing accidents on our highway system, perhaps future legislators would be less inclined to transfer ever-increasing amounts of the state gas tax to law enforcement.

THE TEXAS PLAN

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INCREASE THE VALUE OF OUR TRANSPORTATION ASSETS

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I watched carefully the hearings on red light cameras and speed cameras conducted by the Legislature this past session. While listening to the give-and-take between sides during the hearings, it occurred to me that positions were fervently held, though without much valid research available to support them. I was particularly surprised at the level of concern expressed during the hearings, especially given the number of cameras already in use on the state highway system. For your consideration, I have enclosed a copy of a camera inventory created to help me think through your concern.

After giving your letter a good deal of thought, I have decided my interest in the technology is best explored through the hearing process conducted by the Legislature. Accordingly, I have asked staff to lay the Request for Proposal on the shelf until June 2009.

I want to thank you for your patience while I thought through this important matter. I know you share my commitment to improving the transportation system in our state. You have been a positive and effective voice during a time of high emotion. I look forward to presenting you and your colleagues a well-balanced and carefully administered proposal during the next legislative session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ric Williamson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ric Williamson

Chair

Texas Transportation Commission

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Dennis Bonnen, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Lon Burnam, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Wayne Christian, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Joe Crabb, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Gary Elkins, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Kirk England, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Charlie Geren, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Will Hartnett, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Fred Hill, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Charlie Howard, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Carl Isett, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Susan King, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Thomas Latham, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Jerry Madden, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Jim Murphy, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Mike O'Day, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Rob Orr, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Patrick Rose, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Todd Smith, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Sylvester Turner, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Bill Zedler, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable John Zerwas, Texas House of Representatives  
The Honorable Chris Harris, Texas Senate  
The Honorable Florence Shapiro, Texas Senate  
The Honorable Leticia Van de Putte, Texas Senate  
The Honorable Jeff Wentworth, Texas Senate  
Texas Transportation Commission  
Steven E. Simmons, P.E., Deputy Executive Director

# TxDOT Cameras

## ITS Cameras by District

District	Existing	Under Construction
Abilene	—	
Amarillo	10	6
Atlanta	1	
Austin	72	
Beaumont	—	
Brownwood	—	3
Bryan	—	8
Childress	—	
Corpus Christi	28	2
Dallas	150	48
El Paso	87	
Fort Worth	136	43
Houston	482	
Lubbock	—	9
Lufkin	—	
Odessa	—	
Paris	—	
Pharr	1	
San Angelo	—	
San Antonio	138	
Tyler	13	
Waco	3	
Wichita Falls	9	
Yoakum	—	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1130</b>	<b>119</b>

## Toll System Cameras

	Video Tolling/ Toll Enforcement	Toll Audit	Access and Security	Total (by District)
<b>Austin District</b> (Loop 1, SH45, SH130)	352	297	142	791
<b>Tyler District</b> (Loop 49)	15			16
<b>Dallas District</b> (SH121)	28			28
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>142</b>	
<b>Total</b>				<b>835</b>

## Executed Agreements between Municipalities and TxDOT

City	Number of Intersections on state ROW	Status of cameras
Arlington	7	Pending
Balcones Heights	3	Pending
Dallas	28	Active
Duncanville	2	Active
El Paso	9	Active
Frisco	2	Active
Grand Prairie	7	Pending
Harlingen	5	Pending
Houston	29	Active
Longview	4	Pending
North Richland Hills	32	Pending
Plano	4	Active
Richland Hills	1	Pending
Rowlett	2	Active
<b>Total:</b>	<b>135</b>	

*Note: North Richland Hills is not anticipated to install cameras at all 32 potential locations.*

## Toll Tag Readers

District	Number of Toll Tag Readers
Houston	151
<b>Total:</b>	<b>151</b>

**Grand Total Of Cameras: 2,100**

**Grand Total Of Toll Tag Readers: 151**